

Caregiver Connection

September 2008

A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers



Let Your Voice Be Heard and Work Collaboratively Toward Solutions for Children in Care!

Washington state Foster Parent Children Administration Consultation Team

This legislation has provided additional support for foster families through regional and statewide quarterly consultations with foster parents, the state's foster parent associations regarding key Children's Administration recruitment and retention of foster families, foster parenting and other issues. Please take the opportunity to be heard – your input is important!

The meeting is open to everyone. Please contact your regional foster parent representatives or Michael Luque' MSW, Foster Care & Kinship Care Program Manager if you have any questions about the regional or statewide meetings at 360-902-7986 or email lumi300@dshs.wa.gov.

The next statewide meeting will be held on October 13, 2008 at the Smokey Point Children's Administration office. Watch for more details about this meeting and the regional meetings in future issues of *Caregiver Connection*.

Regional Foster Parent Representatives

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Meet the Londons

The Londons were the all American young family. Jeremiah served his country proudly and while stationed at Ft. Lewis, he met Kristen. The two fell in love, married, were transferred to Germany and had their beautiful son, Matthew. When Matthew was nine months old the Londons returned to Washington where Jeremiah started a career as a Paralegal. The Londons, who had entertained the idea of adopting an infant daughter, were unexpectedly contacted by the Arizona foster care system about being a possible resource for Jeremiah's two nephews. The London's took the two boys, who were one and two years old at the time. The birth mother, a Meth addict, later gave birth to a girl who was also removed and placed with the Londons. While Kristen was attending an adoption support group she learned about an 11-year-old girl in need of a permanent home. Initially hesitant to adding to their already growing family, they welcomed her in. Their forever family now consists of 3 boys and 2 girls. Kristen is 25 and Jeremiah is 28. Their oldest adopted daughter Maddison is 12, their biological son Matthew is 5, they have two adopted boys Jonathon 4 and Andrew 3 and they are in the process of adopting a one-year-old baby girl. The London family grew from one child to five in two years. Kristen says there is no greater joy than helping a child who needs you. She says, "You do not need to foster 100 kids, adopt 5 kids, be married, own a home, or be a certain religion. You just need to open your heart to a child. That child doesn't care about the size of your house, your income or any other THING, they need a person."

The Londons became the perfect all American family for some very deserving kids.

You can too.



Did You Know About... EPSDT?

Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment

Children's Administration partners with our foster and relative caregivers want to make sure that our children receive preventive and necessary health care. One way we can improve the overall health of our children is to make sure they receive a Well-Child exam within 30 days of entering out-of-home placement. Children also need more Well-Child exams which should occur according to the schedule below.

- One Well-Child exam within the first 30 days of placement* and depending on the age of your child:
- 5 exams during the first year of life
- By 1 month
- 2 month
- 4 month
- 6 month
- 9 month
- 3 exams between 1 and 2 years of life
- 12 month
- 18 month
- 24 month
- Annual exams beginning at 3 years.

Well-Child exams are not like exams for children who are sick. Well-Child exams focus on a child's growth, development, vision, hearing and safety. Physicians set aside extra time in these well-child exams to talk about the child's behavior, future development, nutrition, school, and many other important parts of the child's life.

It is important for foster and relative caregivers to make sure their children have Well-Child exam, become familiar with any health concerns, and inform the child's social worker about any problems and needs.

"Sick visits" are appointments with health care providers when the child is ill, for injuries related to abuse, or when the child needs specialist care; sick visits do not take the place of a Well-Child exam.

Dental Exams are also important to the child's overall health. Please make sure that your child is seen by a dentist every six months starting when their cut their first tooth.

Results of the initial Well-Child and dental exams are included in the Child Health & Education Screening Report. Always share the results of medical, (Well-Child and Sick-Visits) dental, and mental health appointments with the child's social worker.

When a child comes to your home from another foster home or relative caregiver, ask the social worker when the most recent Well-Child exam occurred.

Remember: School starts this month. It is the perfect time to schedule your child's annual Well-Child exam.

There are times when your child may not need an initial Well-Child exam within the first 30 days – such as children placed in care from the hospital. If you are unsure, check with the child's social worker to see if an exam is needed. Even if an exam within 30 days is not needed, the schedule for Well-Child exams should still be followed.

NEW POLICY

September 1, 2008 Parent Child Sibling Visits

Relationships between siblings are often the longest lasting in people's lives. When brothers and sisters have to be separated because they are moved away from their biological parents, it is important to keep them connected.

Like you, Children's Administration is committed to making sure that happens.

Beginning September 1, social workers will coordinate the new requirements of a state law to make sure siblings see each other twice a month. As caregivers you may also be asked to help. However, this is not an additional requirement for you. Contracts will be written to provide the service to make that happen if visits are not already occurring.

Please watch for detailed information regarding Parent Child Sibling visits in the Caregiver Connection and foster parent website in the coming month.

Thank you for all you do for children.

The Office of Training and Development and the University of Washington present:

Enhancing Relationships Through Teaming

This is an exciting half day training designed to promote greater understanding and more rewarding relationships between Foster Parents/Relative Caregivers and Children's Administration Social Workers.

Team up with Social Workers and learn how to:

- Identify the challenges of collaboration teaming.
- Discover which of your skills and resources can support teaming efforts.
- Discuss with your partner ways to enhance your working relationship.

Coffee, snacks, lunch and mileage reimbursement will be provided.

Foster Parents and Social Workers who attend the training as a team will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a scholarship to next year's Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference.

To register contact your local Resource Family Training Institute Trainer (RFTI) or Shannon Jackson at 360-902-7648 or obsh300@dshs.wa.gov.

Next Training Date:

Smokey Point – Sept. 16th - 9:00 am to 2:30 pm

Post Adoption **Support**

Did You Know That Adoption Support May Continue for Some Youth 18 and Older?

Your child may remain eligible for the Adoption Support Program past age 18 if the child is still a full time student working toward a high school diploma or GED.

What must you do to continue your child's eligibility?

- Before the child turns 18, you must notify your adoption support program consultant in writing that your child will not graduate at age 18
- Request a letter from the child's school stating that the child is enrolled as a full time student and has an expected graduation date.

Adoption Support agreements are reviewed every five years. The review process is initiated by the Program Consultant in charge of your agreement.

Answers to these and other questions are included in a free booklet available from your regional Program Consultant.

Look for the Adoption Support resource table at this year's Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference September 21-23.

Adoption Corner Book Nook

Below is a list of books (compiled by Child Information Gateway – A service of the Children's Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services)

The Whole Life Adoption Book: Realistic Advice for Building a Healthy Adoptive Family

Author(s): Schooler, Jayne E.; Atwood, Thomas.

Abstract: This book is designed to acquaint prospective and new adoptive parents with options and issues surrounding the early steps of the adoption journey, provide awareness

Making Room in the Family: Unique Challenges Adoptive Parents Must Face (Chapter 1 in *The Whole Life Adoption Book: Realistic Advice for Building a Healthy Adoptive Family*)

Author(s): Schooler, Jayne E.; Atwood, Thomas.

Abstract: This chapter begins by providing a list of questions prospective adoption parents should consider when deciding to adopt.

Transcultural Adoption: Blending Different Worlds (Chapter 4 in *The Whole Life Adoption Book: Realistic Advice for Building a Healthy Adoptive Family*)

Author(s): Schooler, Jayne E.; Atwood, Thomas.

Abstract: Issues surrounding transracial adoptions are addressed, including the outcomes of transracially adopted children, ways parents can prepare to adopt transracially or transculturally, and specific challenges.

Regional Contacts

Region 1 – Spokane

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Pam Copeland* 509-363-3379

Region 2 – Yakima

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(Financial Specialist)

Region 3 – Monroe

Steve Foster* 360-805-3032
Linda Richardson* 360-805-3030

Region 4 – Bellevue

Aaron Washington* 425-590-3072
Jenne Norris 425-590-3069
(Social Worker)

Region 5 – Tacoma

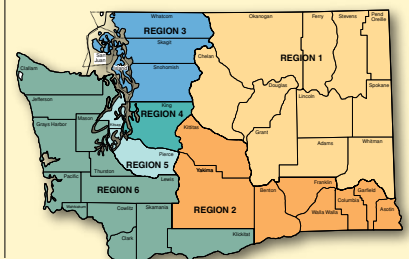
Cindy Anderson* 253-983-6359
Laura Davis* 253-983-6281

Region 6 – Tumwater

Cheryl Barrett* 360-725-6758
Kim Mower* 360-725-6778

Toll free number: 1-800-562-5682
(listen carefully to the recorded message)

* Adoption Support Consultants



Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER

21 **Northwest Indian Education Summit**
Wildhorse Casino/Resort,
Pendleton, Oregon
Bev Youngman (bevy@ctsi.nsn.us)
(NOTE: This event was originally scheduled in May and postponed to September)

22–25 **Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI)**
54th Annual ATNI Conference
Pendleton, Oregon
503-249-1443
www.atntribes.org

26th Annual Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference



Registration is now open if you would like to attend the 2008 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference.

Register Online: www.fpcconference.com

Register by Mail: If you would like to register by mail contact Nikki Plaid at 206-782-5450

For registration information & inquiries contact Nikki Plaid at 206-782-5450 or email Nikki@mcwevents.com

Conference Fees:

Full Conference – (Includes conference fee, materials, activities, and meals): \$180.00

One day Conference – (Includes conference fee, materials, activities, and meals): \$90.00

Lodging: Lodging is available at select hotels for the government rate of \$70.00 per night plus taxes. Visit web-site or contact Nikki for listing.

OCTOBER

The next statewide **Washington State Foster Parent and Children's Administration Consultation Team** meeting is October 13, 2008, from 1:30 to 4:30 pm. Location to be determined. This meeting is open to everyone. For more information, contact your regional foster parent representatives or Michael Luque, Foster Parent and Kinship Care Program Manager at 360-902-7986 or lumi300@dshs.wa.gov.